

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT TACOMA

J.G.C. and J.N.C., by and through their parents and legal guardians, PAUL Y. CHUNG and IRIS J. CHUNG,

Plaintiffs,

V.

WASHINGTON INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATION,

Defendant.

Civil Action No. _____

COMPLAINT

JURY DEMANDED

Compl.

THE BECKET FUND FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY
1200 NEW HAMPSHIRE AVE. NW, SUITE 700
WASHINGTON, DC 20036
TELEPHONE (202) 955-0095

NATURE OF THE ACTION

1. This dispute arises from religious discrimination by the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) against students J.G.C. and J.N.C. in refusing to accommodate their religious beliefs in its scheduling of state high-school tennis championship tournaments, even though it grants other analogous accommodations.

2. J.G.C. and J.N.C. are Seventh-day Adventists whose religious beliefs prohibit them from playing tennis on the Sabbath—a day of rest and worship they observe every week between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday.

3. WIAA is the organization authorized under Washington law to schedule and oversee interscholastic sports and activities within the State of Washington.

4. Although WIAA schedules no state championship tournament play on Sundays, and although it schedules many other state championships to take place entirely during the week, WIAA typically schedules the 2A boys' and girls' state tennis championship tournaments to conclude on a Saturday. As a result, Saturday Sabbath observers like J.G.C. and J.N.C. are prohibited from completing the state championship tournament, solely on account of their religious beliefs.

5. But this is not just a case of state actors failing to accommodate easily accommodatable religious exercise when it conflicts with state requirements—though it is certainly that. Rather this is also a case of a state actor taking a purely hypothetical conflict and using it to prohibit religious believers from participating fully in state high-school athletics even when there is no conflict at all.

6. Specifically, WIAA has interpreted its rules to prohibit players, on pain of penalty, from participating in *any* postseason competition if they are, or know they might be, unable to proceed through the “completion of the championship event.” This means that if the final day of the state championship tournament is scheduled on a Saturday, then a Seventh-day Adventist is prohibited from competing on every other day of postseason play as well—even though the postseason consists of multiple levels

1 of separate tournaments spanning weeks, and even though only a handful of players
 2 advance far enough to play on the last day.

3 7. Further, although WIAA has interpreted its rules to prohibit religiously moti-
 4 vated withdrawals from postseason play, the rules expressly allow withdrawals for
 5 the secular reasons of “injury, illness or unforeseen events”—withdrawals that have
 6 the same effect on competition as a withdrawal to observe the Sabbath.

7 8. Nonetheless, WIAA has refused to extend an accommodation to Sabbath ob-
 8 servers, putting them to a stark choice: The only way they can participate in any
 9 postseason play at all is by abandoning their religious beliefs and agreeing in advance
 10 to violate the Sabbath in the event of a conflict.

11 9. These actions have caused real harm. Last academic year, J.G.C. went unde-
 12 feated in the regular season, but had to sit out of all postseason play after WIAA
 13 denied her family’s request for an accommodation. Only the last day of postseason
 14 play would have conflicted with the Sabbath.

15 10. This year, her brother J.N.C. faces the same dilemma. WIAA has already
 16 scheduled the boys’ state championship tournament to again include Saturday play.
 17 Thus, without this Court’s intervention, J.N.C. will be disqualified from the outset
 18 from participating in postseason competition, even if he would face an actual conflict
 19 between competition and Sabbath only if he advanced to the final day of the state
 20 championship tournament.

21 11. WIAA’s failure to accommodate and its discrimination against J.G.C.’s and
 22 J.N.C.’s religious exercise is unconstitutional, illegal, and must be enjoined. J.G.C.
 23 and J.N.C. are entitled to declaratory and injunctive relief, and J.G.C. is entitled to
 24 nominal and compensatory damages.

25 **JURISDICTION AND VENUE**

26 12. This action arises under the Constitution and laws of the United States. The
 27 Court has subject-matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1331, 1343, and 1367.

13. This Court has personal jurisdiction over WIAA because this case arose from WIAA's actions in Lewis County, Washington, and because WIAA is incorporated and maintains its principal place of business in Renton, Washington.

14. The Court has authority to issue the declaratory and injunctive relief sought under 28 U.S.C. §§ 2201 and 2202.

15. Venue lies in this district under 28 U.S.C. §§ 1391(b)(1) and (2).

16. The events giving rise to Plaintiffs' claims occurred in Lewis County, Washington. J.G.C. and J.N.C. reside in Chehalis, Washington, played tennis for William F. West High School (W.F. West) in Chehalis, and were forced to remain in Chehalis rather than participate in postseason tennis play because of WIAA's actions.

IDENTIFICATION OF PARTIES

17. J.G.C. is a seventeen-year-old girl and a recent high-school graduate. Her parents, Paul and Iris Chung, act as her representatives in bringing this lawsuit on her behalf.

18.J.N.C. is a fifteen-year-old boy and a rising high-school sophomore. His parents, Paul and Iris Chung, act as his representatives in bringing this lawsuit on his behalf.

19. J.G.C. played on the W.F. West girls' tennis team for all four years of high school, from 2015–19. J.N.C. also attends W.F. West, and is a member of the boys' tennis team.

20. J.G.C. and J.N.C. are devout Seventh-day Adventists. Their religion is a defining aspect of who they are.

21. Defendant WIAA is an organization authorized under Washington law to “control, supervise and regulate ... interscholastic activities” in the State of Washington. Wash. Rev. Code § 28A.600.200

22. WIAA comprises nearly 800 public and private schools in Washington and governs and oversees their interscholastic athletic activities. According to WIAA, its “programs provide students with valuable life skills and are an integral part of the total education process.” WIAA, *About Us*, <http://bit.ly/2LSD3z8>.

23. WIAA's policies and scheduling decisions are state action subject to the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution and actions taken under color of state law within the meaning of 42 U.S.C. § 1983. See *Brentwood Academy v. Tenn. Secondary Sch. Athletic Ass'n*, 531 U.S. 288 (2001).

FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS

J.G.C. and J.N.C.'s Religious Beliefs and Practices

24. J.G.C. and J.N.C. are baptized members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and actively attend the Chehalis Seventh-day Adventist Church in Chehalis, Washington.

25. J.G.C. and J.N.C. were baptized when they were eleven and twelve years old, respectively. Being baptized was a personal choice made after each of them individually felt ready to take on the Seventh-day Adventist faith and practices as their own.

26. The Seventh-day Adventist Church is a Protestant Christian denomination with more than 21 million members and a presence in over 200 countries. *A Message to the Seventh-day Adventist Church from the President*, Seventh-day Adventist Church (Apr. 4, 2019), <http://bit.ly/2K6dsAL>.

27. A central tenet of the Seventh-day Adventist faith is observance of the Sabbath from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday. The Sabbath is “God’s perpetual sign of His eternal covenant between Him and His people.” *Living the Sabbath*, Seventh-day Adventist Church, <http://bit.ly/331SmuL>.

28. This practice is biblically ordained. The Fourth Commandment instructs: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy . . . [T]he seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work . . ." *Exodus 20:8-10* (King James).

1 29. The hours of the Sabbath are sacred time devoted to God in worship and pur-
 2 suit of Him for His purposes. Seventh-day Adventists must spend the day in rest,
 3 prayer, and collective worship. *See Living the Sabbath*, Seventh-day Adventist
 4 Church, <http://bit.ly/331SmuL>.

5 30. The Sabbath “encompasses [Seventh-day Adventist’s] entire relationship with
 6 God.” Not keeping it has serious consequences, leading “to the distortion and eventual
 7 destruction of a person’s relationship with God.” *Sabbath Observance*, Seventh-day
 8 Adventist Church, <http://bit.ly/2YDyrCU>.

9 31. The Chungs observe the Sabbath every week in accordance with their religious
 10 faith.

11 32. For the Chung family, keeping the Sabbath holy is a serious commitment.
 12 J.G.C. and J.N.C. do not play or practice tennis on the Sabbath, and J.G.C. missed
 13 her own high-school graduation ceremony because it was held on the Sabbath.

14 33. All the children in the Chung family, including J.G.C. and J.N.C., began taking
 15 private music lessons at between six and seven years old. Most of their music teachers
 16 throughout the years have scheduled recitals so that the Chung children could par-
 17 ticipate, and no member of the Chung family ever participated in a music recital on
 18 the Sabbath.

19 34. The state solo and ensemble music competitions, also organized by WIAA, have
 20 historically been scheduled for Fridays and Saturdays. The Chung children have
 21 never participated in these competitions because of their commitment to the Sabbath.

22 35. J.G.C. and J.N.C. chose to compete in tennis, rather than sports that tradition-
 23 ally play on Friday nights and Saturdays, because tennis matches are typically sched-
 24 uled on weekdays.

25 *WIAA’s Tournament and Rules*

1 36. Each year, WIAA member schools, including W.F. West, participate in post-
 2 season tennis competitions for their boys' and girls' teams culminating in state cham-
 3 pionships organized by WIAA.

4 37. The competitions are divided into three sequential stages—sub-district, dis-
 5 trict, and the state championships.

6 38. Only the most successful players from each sub-district tournament advance
 7 to the district tournaments, and only the top three players from W.F. West's district
 8 tournament advance to the state championships.

9 39. Although each stage is a separate tournament, and although the stages can be
 10 separated in time by months, WIAA's Rule 22.2.5 provides that, absent "injury, ill-
 11 ness or unforeseen events," athletes who enter postseason play must be able to com-
 12 plete it:

13 By entering participants in postseason competition, each member school
 14 certifies that, barring injury, illness or unforeseen events, the team or
 15 individuals representing the school will participate in every level of com-
 16 petition through the completion of the state championship event.

17 WIAA, *2018–19 Official Handbook* (Handbook) 48, <https://perma.cc/P67U-GCPH>.

18 40. Rule 22.2.6 states the consequences for violations of Rule 22.2.5:

19 Any withdrawal or intentional forfeiture shall be considered a violation
 20 of WIAA rules and regulations, and shall be subject to penalties as de-
 21 termined by the WIAA Executive Board.

22 *Id.*

23 41. Despite this restriction, WIAA's regulations include a mechanism for replacing
 24 players who advance from the district tournament but are "unable to compete" in the
 25 state championship. WIAA, *2018–19 Bound for State Regulations-Tennis* 2,
 26 <http://bit.ly/2KeOC0o> (Regulations). In that scenario, the "next qualified contestant"
 27 from the district tournament serves as a substitute. *Id.*

28 *WIAA Denies an Accommodation*

1 42. J.G.C. was a dedicated and talented player on W.F. West's girls' tennis team
2 all four years of high school, from 2015–19.

3 43. At no point in J.G.C.'s high-school career did she face a conflict between a
4 regular-season match and the Sabbath.

5 44. J.G.C. was one of the top players on the team. She first qualified to represent
6 W.F. West in postseason play in 2017–18, her junior year.

7 45. That year, J.G.C. advanced out of the sub-district tournament, but had to
8 withdraw before the district tournament and allow an alternate to take her place
9 when one of her district matches was scheduled to be played on the Sabbath.

10 46. At the time, J.G.C. was unaware that this withdrawal presented any issues
11 under WIAA rules.

12 47. Pointing to WIAA's Rule 22.2.5, however, coaches from other teams expressed
13 displeasure with J.G.C.'s giving her spot to an alternate player for the remainder of
14 the competition.

15 48. The next year, J.G.C. was again expected to qualify for postseason play.

16 49. In light of the previous year's events, the Chung family contacted WIAA to
17 obtain express permission for J.G.C. to play in postseason competition, even if it were
18 too late for the 2018–19 state championship dates to be moved.

19 50. The state championship tournament was scheduled for Friday, May 24, and
20 Saturday, May 25, 2019.

21 51. The matches both days were scheduled to take place before sundown, so only
22 the Saturday matches conflicted with J.G.C.'s Sabbath observance.

23 52. J.G.C. could not participate in the Saturday matches because engaging in
24 sports or similar recreational activities is incompatible with Sabbath observance.

25 53. As a result of her inability to play in the final matches of the state tournament,
26 WIAA's Rule 22.2.5 also barred J.G.C. from participating in the sub-district and dis-
27 trict tournaments, which did not conflict with her Sabbath.

1 54. The Chungs wrote to WIAA seeking a religious accommodation for J.G.C. in
 2 February 2019, three months before the state tournament was scheduled to take
 3 place.

4 55. They asked WIAA to “change rule 22.2.5 to allow religious observances as a
 5 valid reason to drop out of the tournament” so that Sabbatarians “can play as far as
 6 they are able until Sabbath becomes an issue.”

7 56. The Chungs requested that this exception be formalized by amending Rule
 8 22.2.5 to list religiously motivated withdrawals as acceptable, adding them to the
 9 already existing secular exceptions.

10 57. This would protect not just the Chungs but also all Saturday Sabbath observ-
 11 ers who participate in interscholastic activities in the State of Washington, including
 12 Jewish students, other Seventh-day Adventists, and members of other faiths.

13 58. The Chungs also asked that WIAA “move the 2A state tennis tournament” to
 14 weekdays beginning in 2019–20.

15 59. WIAA had previously made a scheduling change for the girls’ volleyball state
 16 championships after a lawsuit from Saturday Sabbatarians seeking an accommoda-
 17 tion. *See Notice of Settlement, Jacobson v. WIAA*, No. 15-2-25734-0 SEA (Super. Ct.
 18 Wash. June 5, 2017); Jayda Evans, *Parents Settle Religious Discrimination Lawsuit*
 19 *with WIAA over Volleyball State Tournament*, Seattle Times (June 23, 2017),
 20 <https://perma.cc/QFP4-VYRM>.

21 60. On information and belief, WIAA has never scheduled athletic events on Sun-
 22 days, a practice that originated, and likely continues in large part, from respect for
 23 Sunday Sabbath observers.

24 61. WIAA had also previously moved the golf state championships from a Fri-
 25 day/Saturday schedule to earlier in the week. That change was made to remove a
 26 conflict with the state tournaments for certain other boys’ sports so that the boys
 27 would not have to choose between sports. Many tennis coaches would like to move the

1 tennis state tournament to a weekday schedule to avoid conflicts with the basketball
2 and track tournaments that are usually scheduled for the same weekend.

3 62. The same week in February that the Chungs wrote to WIAA, their pastor also
4 sent a letter to WIAA, confirming the Chungs' religious beliefs and explaining the
5 importance of the Sabbath to Seventh-day Adventists.

6 63. The Northwest Religious Liberty Association (NRLA) also sent a letter in Feb-
7 ruary to WIAA officials, requesting the same changes to the tournament and rules on
8 behalf of the Chungs.

9 64. On March 4, 2019, WIAA responded to NRLA, verifying the receipt of the let-
10 ters requesting that the tournament date be changed to allow Saturday Sabbath-ob-
11 serving athletes the opportunity to participate.

12 65. NRLA replied to WIAA on March 12, clarifying that the Chungs were seeking
13 not only the date change but also the accommodation of religiously motivated with-
14 drawals under Rule 22.2.5.

15 66. The Chungs sent WIAA a second letter, through counsel, on April 17. The
16 Chungs reiterated their request that J.G.C. be permitted to participate in all matches
17 until Friday at sundown, including in the sub-district and district tournaments, with-
18 out risking penalties if she qualified for the state championship tournament.

19 67. Meanwhile, in regular-season play, J.G.C. went undefeated. Her coaches
20 therefore again selected her to represent W.F. West in postseason play.

21 68. W.F. West's 2018–19 sub-district and district tournaments were scheduled in
22 a way that did not overlap with the Sabbath. The sub-district tournament was held
23 before sundown on Friday, May 3, and Tuesday, May 7, 2019. The district tournament
24 was held the following week, on Thursday, May 16, and before sundown on Friday,
25 May 17. Thus, a Sabbath conflict would materialize only if J.G.C. advanced through
26 the sub-district tournament, the district tournament, and the first day of the state
27 championships.

1 69. On April 23, however, WIAA finally responded to the Chung family via a letter
 2 to counsel, Charles Steinberg. WIAA denied J.G.C. a religious accommodation, claim-
 3 ing that the Chungs' request "violates specific WIAA rules and cannot be granted."

4 70. WIAA stated that Rules 22.2.5 and 22.2.6 "are strictly enforced and have not
 5 been waived in the past."

6 71. Moreover, WIAA said religiously motivated tournament withdrawals would
 7 (1) be "unfair to the athlete who would have qualified" but for the withdrawing athlete
 8 and (2) "create a competitive advantage for the athlete scheduled to play the forfeiting
 9 athlete, who now has the luxury of a bye while the other competitors must continue
 10 playing."

11 72. Although WIAA had previously moved the state volleyball tournament to ac-
 12 ccommodate Sabbath observers, it claimed it could not make a similar accommodation
 13 "[i]n individual sports where multiple matches must be played," even though other
 14 individual sports have mid-week tournaments.

15 73. As a result, J.G.C. was barred from competing in all postseason play.

16 74. Without its top player, W.F. West finished two points behind the school that
 17 accumulated the most points in the 2A girls' state tennis championship tournament.

18 *2019–2020 Boys' State Tennis Championships*

19 75. WIAA has already set the 2A boys' tennis state championship tournament to
 20 take place on Friday, May 29, and Saturday, May 30, 2020.

21 76. J.N.C. expects to be selected to represent W.F. West in the 2019–20 postsea-
 22 son. Sub-district play will begin soon after the last regular-season match currently
 23 scheduled for W.F. West, which is on October 9, 2019.

24 77. Last year, J.N.C. was selected for postseason play as a freshman. Notwith-
 25 standing WIAA's illegal and discriminatory interpretation of Rules 22.2.5 and 22.2.6
 26 to bar religiously motivated postseason withdrawals, he entered postseason play be-

1 cause he knew that he would not be successful enough to advance to the state cham-
 2 pionships and encounter a Sabbath conflict. As expected, he did not qualify to advance
 3 out of the district tournament.

4 78. This year, however, J.N.C. expects to be competitive in qualifying for the state
 5 championships. Thus, J.N.C. will be barred from participating in any of the postsea-
 6 son play the same way that J.G.C. was.

7 79. J.N.C. is far from the only athlete in Washington who will be impacted in this
 8 way by WIAA's actions. One of J.N.C.'s teammates is also a devout Seventh-day Ad-
 9 ventist and will also be forced to sit out the 2019–20 postseason unless the state
 10 championship dates are changed or WIAA is enjoined from enforcing Rules 22.2.5 and
 11 Rule 22.2.6 against religiously motivated tournament withdrawals.

12 80. Further, in 2018, two Saturday Sabbath observers on a 1A boys' tennis team
 13 in Cheney, Washington, were forced to sit out of postseason competition because of a
 14 Sabbath conflict. See Lee Hughes, *Local Parent Requests WIAA Honor Saturday Sab-*
 15 *bath for Student Players*, Cheney Free Press (May 23, 2019), <http://bit.ly/2SViMcW>.
 16 They asked for an accommodation in April 2018, but WIAA refused. *Id.*

17 81. Of the 120 state championship events WIAA has organized for 2019–20, none
 18 includes competition on Sunday. See State Championship Dates 2019–20,
 19 <http://bit.ly/2ycQelA>.

20 **CLAIMS**

21 **Count I**

22 **42 U.S.C. § 1983**

23 **Violation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution**

24 **Free Exercise Clause**

25 **Tournament Scheduling**

26 82. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs.

27 83. “[L]aws burdening religious practice must be of general applicability.” *Church*
 of the Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. v. City of Hialeah, 508 U.S. 520, 542 (1993).

1 84. There is no generally applicable rule mandating that postseason state tournaments be
 2 scheduled on Fridays and Saturdays.

3 85. WIAA's Executive Board determines the dates for state championship tournaments at its
 4 discretion.

5 86. In both the 2018–19 and 2019–20 academic years, the 1B and 2B girls' volleyball state
 6 championship tournaments were scheduled to be held on a Thursday and Friday. Those tournaments involve a round of 16 and quarterfinals played the first day, and semi-final and final matches held the second day.

9 87. This is the same format as the 2A boys' and girls' tennis state championship tournaments.

10 88. Furthermore, in those same academic years, all of the boys' and girls' golf state championship tournaments were scheduled to be held on a Tuesday and Wednesday.

12 89. WIAA, therefore, has no compelling interest in scheduling tournaments for either team or
 13 individual sports on Saturday.

14 90. To the extent WIAA may claim any interests, the means chosen by WIAA are not the least
 15 restrictive to religion.

16 91. J.G.C. and J.N.C. cannot compete in recreational activities between sundown Friday and
 17 sundown Saturday because of their sincerely held religious beliefs as Seventh-day Adventists.

18 92. J.N.C.'s and J.G.C.'s religious exercise has been and will be substantially burdened by
 19 WIAA's decision to schedule the state tennis championship tournament between sundown Friday
 20 and sundown Saturday.

21 93. The only way for J.G.C. and J.N.C. to participate in postseason competition without facing
 22 a penalty, including at the sub-district and district levels, would be to reject their sincerely held
 23 religious beliefs.

24 94. WIAA's choice of scheduling the state championship tournament between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday does not further any compelling state interest according to the means least restrictive of religious exercise.

95. WIAA's scheduling decision violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

96. Unless the schedule for the 2019–20 2A boys' tennis state championship tournament is changed, J.N.C. will not be able to compete in the sub-district and district tournaments that are set to begin in October 2019.

97. Absent injunctive and declaratory relief against WIAA, J.G.C., J.N.C., and other student-athletes in Washington who observe the Sabbath have been and will continue to be irreparably harmed.

Count II
42 U.S.C. § 1983

Violation of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution

Free Exercise Clause

The Withdrawal Rule

98. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs.

99. WIAA's rules also fail to be generally applicable to all individuals participating in its athletic activities.

100. Rule 22.2.5 requires that each student entering postseason competition participate in every level of the competition until the completion of the championship event.

101. A participant who withdraws or intentionally forfeits violates WIAA rules and regulations and is subject to penalties as determined by WIAA's Executive Board.

102. But under Rule 22.2.5, tournament withdrawals in situations of injury, illness, or unforeseen events are exempted from this requirement and the corresponding penalties.

103. The Chungs' sincerely held beliefs as Seventh-day Adventists preclude them from competing in recreational activities between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday.

104. Therefore, they requested a change to Rule 22.2.5 that would allow for tournament withdrawal because of religious obligations.

105. By allowing exceptions for illness, injury, or unforeseen events, but denying an exception for religious observance, WIAA disfavors religious reasons compared to secular reasons.

106. The rule is underinclusive because it fails to restrict nonreligious conduct that endangers the rule's purported aims in the same way as the Chungs' requested accommodation would.

107. WIAA's refusal to change Rule 22.2.5 is a refusal to accord equal treatment to players facing secular and religious obstacles to full tournament participation.

108. Denying this exception has substantially burdened and will substantially burden J.G.C.'s and J.N.C.'s free exercise by barring them from postseason competition unless they violate their religious beliefs.

109. WIAA does not have a compelling government interest pursued by the least restrictive means to justify this unequal application of its rules against sincere religious believers.

110. WIAA's application of Rule 22.2.5 to prohibit religiously motivated withdrawals violates the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

111. Unless WIAA is enjoined from applying its rules to bar religiously motivated tournament withdrawals, J.N.C. will not be able to compete in the sub-district and district tournaments set to begin in October 2019.

112. Absent injunctive and declaratory relief against WIAA, J.G.C., J.N.C., and other student-athletes in Washington who observe the Sabbath have been and will continue to be irreparably harmed.

Count III
Violation of the Washington Constitution, Article 1, § 11
Tournament Scheduling

113. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs.

1 114. Article 1, § 11 of the Washington Constitution provides that “[a]bsolute freedom
 2 of conscience in all matters of religious sentiment, belief and worship, shall be guaranteed to every
 3 individual.”

4 115. “The language of [Washington’s] state constitution is … stronger than the federal
 5 constitution.” *First Covenant Church of Seattle v. City of Seattle*, 840 P.2d 174, 186 (Wash. 1992).

6 116. J.G.C.’s and J.N.C.’s free exercise is substantially burdened by WIAA’s decision
 7 to schedule the 2A state tennis championship tournaments during the Seventh-day Adventist Sab-
 8 bath.

9 117. J.G.C. and J.N.C. cannot compete in recreational activities between sundown Fri-
 10 day and sundown Saturday because of their sincerely held religious beliefs as Seventh-day Ad-
 11 ventists.

12 118. J.G.C. and J.N.C. have been or will be forced to choose between their religious
 13 obligations and the opportunity to compete.

14 119. As an undefeated player in the regular season her senior year, J.G.C. had tremen-
 15 dous potential for success at the state tournament. She had worked hard to prepare for this oppor-
 16 tunity for four years.

17 120. J.N.C. is an incoming sophomore on W.F. West’s tennis team. Beginning in 2020,
 18 he will be similarly denied the opportunity to compete in postseason play for three consecutive
 19 years solely on account of his religious beliefs.

20 121. Infringement of a citizen’s constitutional right must be justified by a compelling
 21 state interest “that prevents a clear and present, grave and immediate danger to public health, peace,
 22 and welfare.” *First Covenant Church*, 840 P.2d at 187 (citation and internal quotation marks omit-
 23 ted).

24 122. WIAA offers no such interest.

25 123. WIAA’s Executive Board determines the dates for all regional and state tourna-
 26 ments at its discretion.

124. In both the 2018–19 and 2019–20 academic years, the 1B and 2B girls' volleyball state championship tournaments were scheduled to be held on a Thursday and Friday. Those tournaments involve a round of 16 and quarterfinals played the first day, and semi-final and final matches held the second day.

125. This is the same format as the 2A boys' and girls' tennis state championship tournaments.

126. Furthermore, in those same academic years, all of the boys' and girls' golf state championship tournaments were scheduled to be held on a Tuesday and Wednesday.

127. WIAA, therefore, has no compelling interest in scheduling tournaments for both team and individual sports on Saturday.

128. To the extent WIAA may claim any interests, the means chosen by WIAA are not the least restrictive to religion.

129. WIAA's actions violate Article 1, § 11 of the Washington Constitution, which guarantees "absolute freedom of conscience in all matters" of religion.

130. Unless the schedule for the 2019–20 2A boys’ tennis state championship tournament is changed, J.N.C. will not be able to compete in the sub-district and district tournaments that are set to begin in October 2019.

131. Absent injunctive and declaratory relief against WIAA, J.G.C., J.N.C., and other student-athletes in Washington who observe the Sabbath have been and will continue to be irreparably harmed.

Count IV
Violation of the Washington Constitution, Article I, § 11
The Withdrawal Rule

132. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs.

133. WIAA's application of Rule 22.2.5 to prohibit religious withdrawals from postseason competition imposes a substantial burden on the religious exercise of Saturday Sabbath observers by barring them from participating in any postseason athletic competition whatsoever if they are not willing to abandon their religious beliefs and participate in competition on the Sabbath.

134. Because of Rule 22.2.5, J.G.C. was barred from participating as a full member of her school's tennis team in 2018–19 despite four years of hard work alongside her teammates and coach, and even though a Sabbath conflict would have arisen only if she had progressed to the last day of the state championship tournament.

135. Under the current schedule, Rule 22.2.5 will similarly prevent J.N.C. from participating in any postseason tennis competition in 2019–20, even if the only Sabbath conflict is similarly on the last day of the state championship tournament.

136. WIAA's refusal to extend Rule 22.2.5's secular exceptions to sincere religious believers is not narrowly tailored to a state interest of a grave and immediate nature.

137. WIAA's application of Rule 22.2.5 thus violates Article 1, § 11 of the Washington Constitution.

138. Unless WIAA is enjoined against applying its rules to bar religiously motivated tournament withdrawals, J.N.C. will not be able to compete in the sub-district and district tournaments set to begin in October 2019.

139. Absent injunctive and declaratory relief against WIAA, J.G.C., J.N.C., and other student-athletes in Washington who observe the Sabbath have been and will continue to be irreparably harmed.

Count V
Violation of Wash. Rev. Code 28A.600.200
Discrimination on the Basis of Creed
Tournament Scheduling

140. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs.

141. Wash. Rev. Code § 28A.600.200(1) prohibits WIAA from discriminating “in connection with any function it performs, on the basis of race, creed, national origin, sex or marital status.”

142. Section 28A.600.200(1) requires WIAA to reasonably accommodate religious exercise, unless accommodation would be an undue hardship.

1 143. There is no rule mandating that state championship tournaments be scheduled on
2 Fridays and Saturdays.

3 144. The WIAA Executive Board sets the dates for state championship tournaments at
4 its discretion.

5 145. In both the 2018–19 and 2019–20 academic years, the 1B and 2B girls' volleyball
6 state championship tournaments were scheduled to be held on a Thursday and Friday. Those tour-
7 naments involve a round of 16 and quarterfinals played the first day, and semi-final and final
8 matches held the second day.

9 146. This is the same format as the 2A boys' and girls' tennis state championship tour-
10 naments.

11 147. Furthermore, in those same academic years, all of the boys' and girls' golf state
12 championships were scheduled to be held on a Tuesday and Wednesday.

13 148. It therefore does not cause undue hardship for WIAA to schedule tournaments
14 for both team and individual sports without interfering with the Sabbath.

15 149. J.G.C. and J.N.C., who observe the Seventh-day Adventist Sabbath, cannot com-
16 pete in sports between sundown Friday and sundown Saturday.

17 150. J.G.C.'s and J.N.C.'s religious practice has been and will be burdened due to
18 WIAA's decision to schedule the tennis state championship tournament after sundown on Friday.

19 151. Because of Rule 22.2.5, the only way for J.G.C. and J.N.C. to participate in any
20 postseason competition would be for them to reject their sincerely held religious beliefs.

21 152. WIAA would not incur undue hardship if it changed the schedule of the
22 2A state tennis championship tournaments because the change would not be costly,
23 the change would not compromise safety, and the change would not infringe on the
24 rights of other students.

25 153. Unless the schedule for the 2019–20 2A boys' tennis state championship tourna-
26 ment is changed, J.N.C. will not be able to compete in the sub-district and district tournaments that
27 are set to begin in October 2019.

154. Absent injunctive and declaratory relief against WIAA, J.G.C., J.N.C., and other student-athletes in Washington who observe the Sabbath have been and will continue to be irreparably harmed.

Count VI
Violation of Wash. Rev. Code 28A.600.200
Discrimination on the basis of creed
The Withdrawal Rule

155. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs.

156. WIAA's Rule 22.2.5 requires that each student entering postseason competition participate in every level of the competition until the completion of the championship event.

157. A participant who withdraws or intentionally forfeits violates WIAA rules and regulations and is subject to penalties as determined by WIAA Executive Board.

158. Rule 22.2.5 exempts from this requirement, and the corresponding penalties, situations of injury, illness, or unforeseen events.

159. By allowing exceptions for illness, injury, or other circumstances, but denying an exception for religious observance, WIAA disfavors religious reasons compared to secular reasons.

160. Rule 22.2.5 is underinclusive because it fails to restrict nonreligious conduct that endangers the Rule's purported aims in a similar way as the requested accommodation would.

161. Because of Rule 22.2.5, J.G.C. and J.N.C. have been and will be unable to compete in the postseason tournaments for tennis simply because they could qualify for a match that falls during their Sabbath.

162. WIAA would not suffer an undue hardship in allowing religiously motivated postseason withdrawals because it already affords the same treatment for withdrawals motivated by illness, injury, or unforeseen events.

163. Thus, the change would not be costly, would not compromise safety, and would not infringe on the rights of other students or employees.

164. Unless WIAA is enjoined from applying its rules to bar religiously motivated tournament withdrawals, J.N.C. will not be able to compete in the sub-district and district tournaments set to begin in October 2019.

165. Absent injunctive and declaratory relief against WIAA, J.G.C., J.N.C., and other student-athletes in Washington who observe the Sabbath have been and will continue to be irreparably harmed.

**Count VII
42 U.S.C. § 1983
Violation of the Religion Clauses**

166. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs.

167. “The clearest command of the Establishment Clause is that one religious denomination cannot be officially preferred over another.” *Larson v. Valente*, 456 U.S. 228, 244 (1982); see also *Colo. Christian Univ. v. Weaver*, 534 F.3d 1245, 1263 (10th Cir. 2008) (First Amendment’s Religions Clauses do “not permit government officials to sit as judges” of religious standards).

168. WIAA does not schedule state championship play on Sunday—the day of the week most widely viewed by other Christian faiths as the Sabbath.

169. Of the 120 state championship events WIAA has organized for 2019–20, none includes competition on Sunday.

170. Thus, Washington high-school athletes who are members of other Christian faiths that observe the Sabbath on a Sunday are never required to compete on their Sabbath, and never forced to choose between competing for a state championship and adhering to their sincerely held religious beliefs. Saturday Sabbatarians like J.G.C. and J.N.C., however, are faced with that requirement.

171. WIAA's discriminatory actions interfere with the free exercise of religion by Saturday Sabbatarians like J.G.C. and J.N.C. and violate the Religion Clauses.

1 172. Absent injunctive and declaratory relief against WIAA, J.G.C., J.N.C., and other
2 student-athletes in Washington who observe the Sabbath have been and will continue to be irre-
3 parably harmed.

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**Count VIII
42 U.S.C. § 1983**

Violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution Equal Protection Clause

173. Plaintiffs incorporate by reference all preceding paragraphs.

174. Under the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution, no state shall deny to any person the equal protection of the laws. This provision requires that similarly situated persons be treated similarly.

175. Under this Clause, courts apply strict scrutiny to state action that interferes with a fundamental right, like the right to free exercise of religion.

176. WIAA does not schedule state championship play on Sunday—the day of the week most widely viewed by other Christian faiths as the Sabbath.

177. Of the 120 state championship events WIAA has organized for 2019–20, none includes competition on Sunday.

178. Thus, Washington high-school athletes who are members of other Christian faiths that observe the Sabbath on a Sunday are never required to compete on their Sabbath, and never forced to chose between competing for a state championship and adhering to their sincerely held religious beliefs. Saturday Sabbatarians like J.G.C. and J.N.C., however, are faced with that requirement.

179. WIAA's discriminatory actions interfere with the free exercise of religion by Saturday Sabbatarians like J.G.C. and J.N.C. and are not the least restrictive means of advancing any compelling state interest.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

Wherefore, Plaintiffs request that the Court:

a. Declare that the First and Fourteenth Amendments to the United States Constitution, the Washington Constitution, and Washington's statutory prohibition on religious discrimination by WIAA require Defendant to cease discriminating against

1 Plaintiffs and to cease preventing Plaintiffs from participating in state postseason
2 tennis competition on account of their religious beliefs.

3 b. Issue preliminary and permanent injunctions barring Defendant from holding
4 matches in the 2019–20 2A Boys State Tennis tournament between Friday sundown
5 and Saturday sundown.

6 c. Issue preliminary and permanent injunctions enjoining WIAA from enforcing
7 its Rules 22.2.5 and 22.2.6 to prohibit J.N.C. from participating in postseason tennis
8 competitions up to and until he is forced to withdraw because of a conflict with his
9 Sabbath.

10 d. Award J.G.C. nominal and compensatory damages for the loss of her rights as
11 protected by the United States and Washington Constitutions and Wash. Rev. Code
12 § 28A.600.200.

13 e. Award Plaintiffs the costs of this action and reasonable attorneys' fees; and

14 f. Award such other further relief as the Court deems equitable and just.

15 **JURY REQUEST/DEMAND**

16 Plaintiffs request a trial by jury on all issues so triable.

17 Respectfully submitted this 6th day of August, 2019.

19 /s/ Eric S. Baxter
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25 **Pro Hac Vice admission pending*